LANINGHAM: I'm Scott Laningham with developerWorks New Media.

If you've ever asked Google a question...I mean, who hasn't, right? Maybe something obscure like, how do you get bubble gum out of your hair? I haven't asked that one, but maybe you have.

The point is, you know there are way more questions on the Web than there are answers, right? Even if you don't know much about hair and bubble gum, you surely know a lot about something.

• Maybe you're an expert in applying secure engineering practices to software development.

• Maybe you know how to use agile strategies to speed up the development cycle.

• Or perhaps you understand the ins and outs of CSS and how it can create more responsive websites.

Chances are you know something other people don't know, and you have answers to some of those unanswered orphaned questions.

Well, developerWorks is the perfect place to put your expertise out where IT practitioners can take advantage of what you know. As a developer or subject matter expert, you'll find a lot of options to help you engage with others who can benefit from your expertise.

At developerWorks, we like to think of the options in this three categories for engaging with the community: create, amplify and follow.

So let's start with the easiest, least time consuming of the three, following. Now, maybe you're confused, since I was just talking about helping to establish you as a leader. But the thing is, a leader doesn't amount to much without a following, right? And one good way to build one is to do some of that yourself by following others who are heading up an idea or knowledge area. And there are many leaders to follow on developerWorks. For example, the IBM Champions are subject matter experts that are recognized and highlighted on developerWorks for their leadership activity. I've spoken to them many times on the developerWorks podcast and at conferences, and they're always eager to share knowledge. There are dozens of developerWorks blogs you can follow featuring a wide
sampling of knowledge. There's a wide variety of dW forums; some of them very active. And of course, we also have a lot of RSS feeds so you can customize how you receive content from developerWorks. Unless you're one of the few people not using Facebook, be sure to follow our Facebook page as well.

For the topics you know something about, you might challenge yourself to get a little more active. Think about how you can magnify what's being said by adding your two cents. When you amplify another's content, you draw attention to it and make it more powerful. You add depth to the message. In effect, you're saying, "I agree, this message resonates with me," and you're calling it to the attention of your circle of acquaintances. So this is what we call the megaphone step: you're increasing the volume of what's already being said.

Nearly everyone can amplify and follow even if they aren't in the content creation business. But if you do have an idea to share, we enthusiastically encourage original content. What you know can save someone else time and help with the technology decision. We all know that's a powerful way to build credibility in a community. So, choose a way to contribute that matches the time you have, the subject you're covering and the way you look to communicate.

You know, we're proud of what developerWorks has become, in large part due to the participation of users and contributors all over the world. So as you consider what to do with your valuable professional time, remember that developerWorks is the perfect place to put your expertise out where IT practitioners can take advantage of what you know and grow your own brand in the process.

I'm Scott Laningham. I'll see you on developerWorks.

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